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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2018  
TAGS: PREL PHUM KDEM EG  
SUBJECT: AYMAN NOUR'S WIFE ON ASSETS ISSUE AND NOUR'S  
EFFORTS TO GET RELEASED

REF: A. CAIRO 289

¶B. CAIRO 346

Classified By: DCM Stuart E. Jones, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a February 22 meeting, Gameela Ismail (wife of imprisoned former Ghad party leader Ayman Nour), told us that she believes the government "is taking a step back" with regard to turning over some of Nour's assets to his government-backed rival and current leader of the Ghad party, Moussa Moustapha Moussa (ref B). Ismail flagged that the alleged letter from the Political Parties Committee (PPC) on the issue had been published in two Egyptian newspapers. The letter appears to be the PPC's response to a court request for a listing of Ghad party offices, for use in the ongoing lawsuit that Moussa filed in an effort to take control of Ghad party offices nationwide. Nour's home is the first property on the list; however, the PPC letter notes that the property listings are derived from a statement provided to it by the Ghad party in 2004 (when Nour was still president). Ismail noted that she welcomes USG engagement with the GOE on this issue, either privately or publicly. (Note: We recommend against any public engagement on the issue until the situation clarifies. End note). She also said she had checked with Nour regarding the notion of his taking a sabbatical abroad for a year or so, if he was released from prison (ref A); according to Ismail, Nour rejected such an option: "He would rather spend another year in prison than put that condition on his release." End summary.

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CONFUSION OVER ALLEGED TURNOVER OF NOUR ASSETS TO  
GOVERNMENT-BACKED RIVAL  
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¶2. (C) During the February 22 meeting, we asked Ismail about press reports that the Political Parties Committee (PPC) had issued a decision turning various assets of Nour (including his family apartment) over to Moussa Moustapha Moussa, the new government-backed Ghad party leader (ref B). Ismail said that in her recent meeting with presidential chief of staff Zakariya Azmy, she was told that the PPC had not issued any order that would result in the Nour family being removed from their home. Ismail, however, cited a letter signed by PPC secretary Emad al Naggar, which lists as party property

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several Ghad offices nationwide, but also the Nour family apartment in Zamalek (which tops the lists of properties), as well as some allegedly personal family properties of Nour in

Mansoura. (Note: A photocopy of the alleged letter was published in two newspapers in past days, and a full translation is at para 7. Rather than expressly ordering the turnover of the properties to Moussa, the letter appears to be a response to a court request for the addresses of Ghad party head-quarters, for use in a lawsuit Moussa has reportedly filed, with which he aims to take over all Ghad party properties. End note).

¶3. (C) On February 21, in a government press service statement, the PPC denied media reports that it had allowed Moussa to take over Nour's residence, noting that the only decision it has taken regarding the Ghad party was on July 31, 2007, when it called for implementing a Cairo court ruling that announced Moussa as the new party leader. The statement quoted Moussa as denying that he had been allowed to take possession of Nour's residence and office: "I am still waiting for a court ruling."

¶4. (C) At this point, it seems that the PPC, responding to the request of the Seventh District Cairo Court for Urgent Matters, where Moussa's lawsuit to take control of Ghad party properties is being heard, simply provided the court with a listing of Ghad party offices, citing an alleged 2004 Ghad party document as the source of the property listings. It is unclear at this point when the court will rule on Moussa's suit. If he wins the case, it appears possible that as current Ghad party president, he would then legally have the right to take over all Ghad party properties, which the PPC delineates as including Nour's private home. Ismail told us that the Nour home is registered under the names of Nour's two teenage sons, Nour and Shadi. She said she believes the government "realizes it has crossed a red-line with this, and is taking a step back." However, she plans to "continue to raise a fuss" over the next week, "so that the government gets the clear signal that this would be unacceptable, and that they should not consider doing this now, or in the future." She welcomed USG engagement with the GOE on this issue, either privately or publicly. (Note: We recommend against any public engagement on the issue until the situation clarifies. End note).

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NOUR'S EFFORTS TO GET RELEASED  
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¶5. (C) In addition to noting that Nour has no interest in spending a sabbatical year abroad, should he be released, Ismail said that last week, Nour sent a letter to parliamentary speaker Fathi Surour and presidential chief of staff Zakariya Azmy, detailing the options as he sees them for resolving "this mess" - (1) releasing Nour through a special presidential pardon, (2) releasing Nour under the aegis of a general holiday amnesty, together with hundreds of other prisoners, or (3) conducting a re-trial. After receiving the letter, Azmy called Ismail, and invited her to meet with him on February 20. According to Ismail, Azmy told her that Mubarak "holds nothing personally against Nour .... this is all a legal issue, and therefore, we want to resolve it via legal means, through a re-trial." Amir Salem, Nour's lead lawyer who accompanied Ismail to the meeting, allegedly complained that a retrial would be a lengthy process, and that the Public Prosecutor would require "a sign" from Azmy or another senior official to move forward, as otherwise, the process would remain "paralyzed," and the Public Prosecutor would "continue to be unresponsive to Nour's complaints and requests for a retrial." Azmy did not offer any encouragement that such a sign would be given. According to Ismail, Salem visited Nour in prison on February 21, and convinced him that a retrial was too time-consuming, and likely an ultimate dead-end. Salem, with Nour's apparent agreement, is now preparing a formal request for a pardon.

¶6. (C) Ismail noted that in her last meeting with Nour, he emphasized that he has "no sensitivity" to the USG raising his case publicly. She commented, "in fact, he feels just the opposite - he hopes you will continue to mention his case

publicly."

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TEXT OF LETTER REGARDING GHAD PARTY PROPERTIES  
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¶7. (U) Per para 2, the below letter was published on February 23 in the independent Al Dustour newspaper. The letter appeared as an apparent photo-copy of an original, Begin text of letter:

Mr. Counselor/President of Cairo Court For Urgent Matters (7th District):

Greetings, in reference to the permit issued by Cairo Court For Urgent Matters in case number (not legible) 2008, regarding the permission to obtain a certificate detailing the addresses of the main head-quarters of Al Ghad party, we would like to inform your Excellency that the Political Parties Committee was sent a notification by the party on July 2, 2004 of the following main and satellite offices for the party within the Republic as follows:

- 1 - Main Office: 4 Al Malek Al Afdal St., Zamalek.
- 2 - 21 Mahmoud Bassiouny St., Talaat Harb Sq., Cairo.
- 3- 36 El Gaish St., Cairo.
- 4 - 115 Sherif St., Cairo.
- 5 - Port Said Governorate, El Salam Towers, behind the Security Directorate.
- 6 - 6 Abdel Salam Aref St., Mansoura
- 7 - 5 Al Bahr Al Aazam St., Mansoura
- 8 - 21 Port Fouad St., in front of Al Shaaranyy Mosque (MP Saif Mahmoud's office)
- 9 - 6 Darb El Bazazra, El Banhawym off of El Gaish St.
- 10 - 6 El Gaish St., Assiut
- 11 - 14 Al Bahr St., Aswan
- 12 - El Mohafza St., New Valley
- 13 - Toor, in front of South Sinai Court
- 14 - 9 Mansheyya, Alexandria
- 15 - 7 Al Thawra St., Ismailiyya.

Please accept our highest regards,

Rapporteur of the Political Parties Committee,

Counselor Emad El Naggar

End text of letter.

RICCIARDONE